

COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
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TESTING MEMO NO. 587

October 27, 2006

TO: Division Directors of Testing

FROM: Shelley Loving-Ryder, Assistant Superintendent
Division of Assessment and Reporting

SUBJECT: Guidelines for the Read-aloud/Audio Accommodation on the
Standards of Learning (SOL) Reading Tests and the Virginia
Grade Level Alternative (VGLA) for Reading

This information is conveyed in Informational Supts. Memo No. 235, dated October 27, 2006.

As announced in a Superintendent's e-mail dated October 10, 2006, the United States Department of Education has advised states that scores resulting from the use of nonstandard accommodations on tests may not be used in the calculation of Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). States have flexibility in determining which accommodations are nonstandard-based on the construct measured by the test. Virginia has determined that the Standards of Learning (SOL) reading tests measure primarily comprehension of fiction and nonfiction materials. Based on this determination, a read-aloud/audio accommodation for the SOL reading tests will no longer be considered a nonstandard accommodation for students who are unable to read because of their disability.

Beginning with the spring 2007 Standards of Learning test administration, the following guidelines apply to the use of the read-aloud/audio accommodation on the statewide reading assessments for students with disabilities:

ALLOWED

Students with a visual impairment, including blindness, and those students with a specific disability that severely limits or prevents them from decoding text at any level of difficulty, as determined by a diagnostic tool(s) or instrument(s) administered by a qualified professional, are allowed to use the read-aloud/audio accommodation on the statewide reading assessments.

NOT ALLOWED

Students with disabilities who are simply having difficulty reading text and/or are reading below grade level are not allowed to use the read-aloud/audio accommodation on the statewide reading assessments.

The following questions and answers should guide decision-making to implement this new requirement:

Who should be considered?

Those students should be considered for a read-aloud/audio accommodation on the reading assessments who:

- demonstrate a weakness in decoding and the IEP/504 Plan identifies diagnostic information and goals to address this area;
- demonstrate adequate comprehension;
- have access to the general education curriculum; and
- use accommodations for the identified weakness in decoding.

What diagnostic instrument is appropriate?

The list below includes common diagnostic instruments and their publishers. This is not an exhaustive list but may be a resource for the IEP Team/504 Committee. Other tests may be administered at the discretion of the division.

Diagnostic Instrument	Affiliation/Publisher
Comprehensive Test of Phonological Processing in Reading	Pro-Ed Publishing Co.
Test of Phonological Awareness	Pro-Ed Publishing Co.
The Phonological Awareness Test	LinguiSystem
Test of Word Reading Efficiency	AGS Publishing
Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening (PALS)	University of Virginia
Yopp-Singer Test of Phoneme Segmentation	The Reading Teacher (Vol.49, No.1. pp 20-29)

If such assessment results are currently in the student's record, no additional testing is required.

Who may administer the instrument?

Among qualified professionals in the school division who may administer the test are a:

- learning disabilities teacher
- speech language pathologist
- reading specialist
- school psychologist

Refer to the instrument manual for other qualified personnel.

How will 2006-2007 IEPs be affected by this change?

If the read-aloud/audio accommodation for the reading test is identified on the student's current IEP and the student is found to be **eligible** for this accommodation as a result of diagnostic testing, no changes to the IEP are required at this time. The accommodation will be coded as standard on the SOL test answer document. A passing score will count for all purposes.

If the read-aloud/audio accommodation for the reading test is identified on the student's current IEP and the student is found to be **ineligible** for the accommodation as a result of diagnostic testing, the IEP team must be convened to consider the continuance of that accommodation as it applies to the SOL reading test administration.

If an IEP team determines that the student is not eligible for the accommodation and the IEP is not amended, the accommodation may remain as a nonstandard accommodation and the student's test record will be identified as such. Beginning with the spring 2007 SOL test administration, students who use a read-aloud or audio accommodation on the test who do not meet the eligibility criteria will count as non-participants and as failing in the calculation of Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP).

Beginning with the 2007-2008 school year, the read-aloud/audio accommodation on the reading tests will continue to be allowed for those students who meet the criteria as described above. However, for those students who are ineligible under the criteria, the accommodation will not be allowed as a nonstandard accommodation.

Questions about the students' eligibility for the read-aloud/audio accommodation should be directed to Diane Gilliam, Office of Special Education Instruction at Diane.Gilliam@doe.virginia.gov or (804) 371-8283. Questions about testing should be directed to the Division of Assessment and reporting at darfax@doe.virginia.gov or (804) 225-2102.

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